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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/777,189	02/13/2004	Shigetoshi Wakayama	042107	8258
38834	7590	11/06/2006	EXAMINER	
WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP 1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, DC 20036			PHAM, HOAI V	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2814	

DATE MAILED: 11/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<p align="center">Office Action Summary</p>	Application No. 10/777,189	Applicant(s) WAKAYAMA ET AL.	
	Examiner Hoai v. Pham	Art Unit 2814	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 September 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5 and 7-15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. **Claims 1-4, 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Usui [U.S. 2005/0082577] previously applied.**

With respect to claim 1, Usui (figs. 6-7, col. 3-4) discloses a semiconductor device, comprising:

semiconductor substrate (11); and

a multilayer interconnection structure formed on said substrate, said multilayer interconnection structure comprising:

a first guard ring (21) extending continuously in said multilayer interconnection structure along periphery of said semiconductor substrate; and

a second guard ring (21) extending continuously in said multilayer interconnection structure along said periphery so as to be encircled by said first guard ring, said second guard ring encircling an interconnection pattern inside said multilayer interconnection structure;

said first and second guard rings (21) being connected with each other mechanically and continuously by a bridging conductor pattern (22) extending continuously in a band form along a region including said first and second guard rings, when viewed in the direction perpendicular to a principal surface of said semiconductor substrate.

With respect to claim 2, Usui discloses that wherein said bridging conductor pattern (22) does not have any of a gap or an opening (fig. 6).

With respect to claim 3, Usui discloses that wherein said bridging conductor pattern (22) is provided at plural different positions having different heights as measured from a surface of said semiconductor substrate (fig. 6).

With respect to claim 4, Usui discloses that wherein said bridging conductor pattern (22) is formed in one or more interlayer insulation films (15) in said multilayer interconnection structure.

With respect to claim 6, Usui discloses that wherein said multilayer interconnection structure has a layered structure in which a plurality of interlayer insulation films (15) each including an interconnection layer corresponding thereto are stacked, and wherein an interconnection layer formed in one interlayer insulation film of said plural interlayer insulation films is connected to an underlying interconnection layer

by a via-plug (23), each of said first and second guard rings having a layered structure identical to that of said multilayer interconnection structure, said bridging conductor pattern being formed at a height identical to that of the interconnection layer in said interlayer insulation film in which said bridging conductor pattern is formed (fig. 6).

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-4 and 6 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.


Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hoai v. Pham whose telephone number is 571-272-1715. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

5. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wael M. Fahmy can be reached on 571-272-1705. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2814

6. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


HOAI PHAM
PRIMARY EXAMINER